



# Cherokee National Forest

## Fall & Winter Safety Tips

USDA Forest Service

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<http://fs.usda.gov/cherokee>

423-476-9700



## Visiting the Great Outdoors

Each year approximately 2 million people visit the 656,000 acre Cherokee National Forest. This area offers a variety of recreation opportunities from hiking, hunting and camping to fishing, picnicking and mountain biking.

To ensure that your visit to the great outdoors is enjoyable and memorable always put safety first! Before you participate in any outdoor activity think about the basic rules of safety that apply.



**Be prepared for sudden weather changes.**

### Remember:

- National forests are remote and rugged.
- The environment in a national forest is much different than in urban areas.
- Planning your visit ahead of time may help make your visit more enjoyable and safer.
- Let someone at home know what your outing plans are.
- There are various types of hunting seasons going on in the Cherokee National Forest approximately nine months out of the year.

## Outdoor Safety Tips

**Flash Flooding**—A flash flood is a serious weather event for forest visitors because rising flood water is extremely dangerous—a sudden surge can claim victims in less than one minute.

There may be very little time to react. Forest visitors need to be conscious about sudden storms.

Families should discuss how they would alert each other and climb to safety if rushing water arrives.

Weather experts say the best defence is to be weather-ready before a storm hits.

When a NOAA flash flood warning is issued for your area, or the moment you

realize that water is rising around you, act quickly!

You might only have seconds to save your life.

Climb to higher ground. Do not get into a vehicle.

Monitor weather forecasts prior to and during your visit!

Flash flood web information:

<http://www.fs.usda.gov/r8>



# Visiting the Great Outdoors

**Bear Aware**— Keep in mind that black bears make their home in the Forest. Bears are opportunists by nature and will feed on whatever is readily available. To reduce the chances of a bear encounter follow these simple rules:

**NEVER** feed bears: Do not leave food out unattended; Properly dispose of trash; Do not cook or store food in or near your tent or sleeping area: Keep a clean campsite;

**NEVER** approach a bear: Keep children & pets close at hand; If a black bear approaches, frighten it by yelling, wave your arms—try to look big, bang pans, or throw sticks or rocks. If the bear is persistent, move away slowly to a secure area— never run. If in a group, stay together.

**DO** respect bears and admire them from a distance.

**Lost** — If you become lost don't panic - stay calm! Try and remember how you got to your present location. Look for landmarks such as trails, streams, high points etc.

Try to find a high point with a good view and plan your route from there. If you find a trail or road stay on it.

Sometimes it may be wise to stay where you are and wait for help to find you. If you stay put it may help if you wait in the open where you are clearly visible. To help draw attention use three shouts, three blasts on a whistle, three flashes of a light, three of anything is an international distress signal. If you decide to proceed

go slowly. Take your time and gather *your wits*.

**Driving** — Be mindful that most roads in the national forest are gravel or dirt and more suitable for high clearance vehicles. Driving conditions are much different than in urban areas. Slow down, watch for curves, rough driving surfaces and other vehicles. Be cautious of water crossings and of inclement weather.

**Be Prepared** — If you plan a late season visit to the Cherokee National Forest let someone at home know what your outing plans are. Be prepared for cold temperatures, especially at night. Check weather forecasts before and during your visit.

Always be prepared for the *un-thinkable* such as a vehicle breakdown, injury or sudden change in the weather. Wear clothing and footwear appropriate for a backcountry outing. Keep blankets in your vehicle, carry a thermos of hot beverages, bring drinking water, always bring a first aid kit, keep flashlights on hand, have a map of the area with you and bring other items that will help you in an unplanned situation.

Overnight camping, long hikes and other demanding activities **may be things that you postpone until weather conditions are more favorable.**



**For more safety information visit the web site:**

<http://www.fs.usda.gov/r8>



**Enjoy your Cherokee National Forest . Be safe and plan for the unexpected.**

**SAFETY TIPS**





# Visiting the Great Outdoors

**Hunting -** The Cherokee National Forest (Forest) offers an array of outdoor recreation opportunities including hunting.

Under an agreement with the Forest Service and the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency (TWRA) the Forest is managed cooperatively as a Wildlife Management Area (North Cherokee WMA; South Cherokee WMA). The Forest Service is responsible for managing wildlife habitat and the TWRA sets game and fish seasons and bag limits.

Much of the Cherokee NF is open for hunting within legal seasons. Six bear reserves are found throughout the Forest and are closed to bear hunting. Areas such as recreation and administrative sites are closed to hunting. It is illegal to shoot any firearm across or from trails, roads or vehicles.

When hunting the national forest hunters are reminded to respect private land boundaries and be aware of the presence of non-hunting visitors. Be safe and always know your target.

There are approximately 1,500 miles of roads in the Forest. About half of those (750 miles) are closed to vehicular traffic. Unless posted otherwise, closed (gated) roads are open to foot, bicycle and horse use.

General Forest visitors should be aware that there are various types of hunting seasons going on in the Cherokee National Forest approximately nine months out of the year. For complete information regarding hunting seasons visit online:

<http://www.tn.gov/twra/section/hunting-in-tennessee>

## **Hunter Safety Tips:**

Treat every firearm with the same respect due a loaded firearm.

Control the direction of your firearm's muzzle.

Be sure of your target and what is beyond it.

Be sure the barrel and action are clear of obstructions.

Unload firearms when not in use.

Never point a firearm at anything you do not intend to shoot.

Never shoot a bullet at a flat, hard surface or water.

Avoid alcoholic beverages or other mood-altering drugs before or while shooting.

Be respectful of non-hunters in the vicinity.

Respect private land boundaries.

## **Non Hunter Safety Tips::**

Wear bright clothing. Make yourself and your pets more visible.

Make noise as you walk to alert hunters to your presence.

Once a hunter is aware of your presence, don't make unnecessary noise to disturb wildlife.

Make yourself known. If you do hear shooting, raise your voice and let hunters know that you are in the vicinity.

Check with the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency for information regarding where and when hunting seasons are scheduled.



**Many hunters use gated roads to access remote hunting areas.**

## **Hunting information for Cherokee National Forest**

For hunting regulations and season information in the Cherokee National Forest (Wildlife Management Area) on line:

<http://www.tn.gov/twra/section/hunting-in-tennessee>

**South Cherokee WMA (#305)—**  
TWRA Region III—931-484-9571

**North Cherokee WMA (#402)—**  
TWRA Region IV—423-587-7037

